

The concept of determinants of health goes beyond purely medical boundaries. It includes four major elements that contribute to health problems. They are (1) environment, (2) human biology, (3) lifestyle and behaviors, and (4) the health care system. Any health problem can be traced to one or a combination of the four elements. The environment will rank first in this framework.

The environment category includes all those matters related to health which are external to the human body and over which the individual has little or no control. In this document, we refer to environment as (1) physical environment, including all areas of environmental health, and (2) social environment, including, demographic indicators, sociodemographic indicators, and socioeconomic indicators

Because of the importance of the health care system, we separate it from the environmental element. The health care system consists of the quantity, quality, arrangement, nature, and relationship of people and resources in the provision of health care.

The human biology element includes all those aspects of health which are developed within the human body as a consequence of the basic biology of man and the make-up of the individual. There is no feasible population-based human biology indicator available now.

The lifestyle and behavior category consists of the aggregation of decisions by individuals that affect their health. The behavioral risk factors domain in the APEXCPH Community Health Status Assessment list can be considered to belong to the lifestyle and behavior element.

Health status is related to a more medical view of health. It is generally accepted that there are two components to health status, (1) a subjective one based on an individual, personal reading of health status, and (2) a so-called objective one based on a normative, professional assessment. Subjective health status is defined as a person's own assessment of his or her health. Objective health status refers to an assessment by a health professional. It is recognized that a professional assessment remains a judgement, though based on criteria that are more specific and on which some consensus has been reached. Objective health includes mortality, morbidity (hospital morbidity, non-hospital morbidity, physician visit and non-physician visit).

Consequences of health include disability (long-term and short-term), use of health services, the use of medication and quality of life.

III. SOURCES OF DATA

Eight types of data are identified to support this community health assessment.

- (1) Vital statistics (mortality and natality data)
- (2) Morbidity data (notifiable disease records, cancer incidence data, and others)
- (3) Behavioral risk and quality of life survey data